

ALONE

I like to eat breakfast alone.
I've been eating for years
with people and I just now
realized this. I like
the whole table to stretch
the newspaper. I like
to take a long time — a piece
of fruit, buttered toast, coffee.
A long time with the coffee.
Holding the cup, looking
out the window. Nothing
except what's on the table
and what's opposite
myself through the window.

— Laton Carter

Eugene OR

AFTERWARDS

tiny lakes of salt
flecked the bed
marking the place
where we lay

like a police chalk line

you said
and made me wash
the sheets
even though
I did not want to.

BARBARA

What is there to say about Barbara?

She has a full-time job with benefits, dresses casually,
makes her own hours, wears a white lab coat, gloves
(when necessary), spends her day examining
specimens beneath a ventilated hood, then
sends them away to be properly disposed of.

What else is there to say?

She undergoes a mandatory physical every year and to date there is nothing seriously wrong with her. She does notice more hair in the shower drain, but the hairbrush isn't carrying away large clumps, and the pay is decent. What with the recession and wanting nothing to do with welfare — it's not such a bad job.

What else is there?

— Thomas Gianakopoulos

Los Angeles CA

EASTER SUNDAY: 1994

and we spent it with my
mom and my sister and her
husband and her little boy;

my brother in law worked on
the lawnmower while i read
the chicago paper to see if
i could find a job there;

my lady had just been accepted
into school there and i cldnt

find a goddamn thing and kevin
cldnt figure out what was
wrong with the mower so he
loaded it up and drove it into
town to get it looked at and

my mom asked if we wanted to
scatter my dads ashes before
or after we had strawberry
pie for dessert she cried
while she scattered the ashes;

they looked like white chips
of gravel, burned hard and
angry by the fire from the oven

i had no idea that they would
look like that; i had images
of sooty fireplace ashes,
something like dust that
would just float away when
it hit the air, but these
ashes were SOLID, they hit